

HENFIELD COMMONS JOINT COMMITTEE MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **Henfield Commons Joint Committee** to be held at **10-00am on Friday 6th March 2026 in the Committee Room at Henfield Hall**

Members: Cllrs. Gill Perry (chair), Roger Noel, Josh Potts
Tony Baker, John Willis (non-voting members)

Officers: Pete Crawford, Malin Andersson, Emily Gibbons-Filippini (minutes)

1. **DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS:**
2. **APOLOGIES:** Chris Simmonds, Jake Everitt, Neal Matheson, Mark Andrews
3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF 19/09/25:** Discussion of the financial data in the previous minutes. MA confirmed official income is £20,373. Minutes approved without change.
4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None
5. **MATTERS ARISING:** None
6. **OPEN FORUM /CORRESPONDENCE:** None
7. **TANYARD:**

MA and PC confirm that scrub management is part of the new Tanyard Management Plan, and they recently met with Mr and Mrs Street to confirm that the blackthorn behind their property will be cut on rotation, with an older patch due for cutting this year. PC further notes that historic plan documents show screening of the houses adjacent to the Tanyard.

PC or MA to circulate new Tanyard management plan to committee members

HDC plan to replace the mowing gate next to Mr Street's property in the 26/27 financial year with a like-for-like replacement.

RN mentions the overall appearance of the Tanyard has improved.

MA confirms recent works: grassland cut and collect; yellow rattle seeding; scrub management on new hedge planted last year; litter picking; digging out of non-native species; hedge cutting. MA notes the discovery of access to pipework between Southern and middle ponds, to rod and unblock as needed. PC and GP request this be kept clear of scrub in future.

MA to map pipe access

JW notes the top rail is missing from the fence. MA confirms the fence replacement will begin on Monday, and the black gate will also be collected and installed the same day. JW asks if the water tank beside the barn is active and who pays the bill. PC notes it is likely paid for from an HDC Property budget.

GP asks for an update on the information board and MA confirms this is an upcoming task now winter tasks are completed.

Tanyard Barn

RN and JP met Paul Anderson before Christmas, where it was estimated that barn repairs would total £50,000. Property refused this cost, but later Liz Williams and Paul discussed the essential requirements (new pointing, new door, weatherproofing) and agreed on an estimate of £10,000. The structural report recommended a rebuild, but the aim is to simply make it waterproof and secure as

a functional toolshed. Sean Williams from Property also recently visited the barn. RN mentions the Chairman of the Council Tony Bevis' attendance at Henfield Committee Partnership the previous Friday and his engagement with the barn repairs. Next steps should be clarified in RN and JP's next meeting with Paul. PC confirms the barn repairs will now be paid for from the 26/27 Property budget, that Property will instruct a builder, and that HCJC should make sure the contractor has a committee member's contact details.

Gardens and Arts Festival

GP mentions Henfield Festival of Gardens and Arts is on 13th and 14th June this year. The event is organised by an individual group who have requested that the Tanyard is opened for local people, and that the Parish invite attendees such as Tara Dawson from the Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Sussex Wildlife Trust, and similar. Members of the conservation volunteers are keen to host activities. GP notes that the event is for a charitable cause and raised over £12,000 last year. GP also mentions that local ecologist Libby Morris would like to do an iNaturalist challenge in the Tanyard on the same weekend as the event.

PC and MA to consider if HDC can contribute any information for presentation at the event

General discussion regarding possible mown routes through the Tanyard. RN queries the prior existence of entrances at Chestnut End and by the Roman Catholic Church, and the potential for improved accessibility. PC suggests the Chestnut End entrance is a better option due to the current gate and plans to replace it. GP notes this location would better facilitate a route for attendees to visit other open gardens. This entrance is an established right of access only for mowing and maintenance and MA notes that Mr Street and the resident opposite will need to be consulted.

PC and MA to contact Mr Street regarding potential public access from Chestnut End MA to ensure the Tanyard is mown for the event

GP feeds back from the meeting with Henfield Gardens & Arts: there was praise for MA's pond clearance work and general disapproval of children discarding litter at the site. JW suggests the area will be less of a target once the vegetation has grown more. MA confirms the species planted are all growing well: water mint, rushes, native aquatic plants, purple loosestrife, and flag iris.

MA notes upcoming plans to conduct a breeding bird survey, reptile surveys, a Great Crested Newt Survey, and to place footprint tunnels for a hedgehog survey.

GP asks about butterfly eggs on blackthorn. MA explains that eggs are usually found on newer growth blackthorn, so you cut the older growth. You can cut off a branch with the eggs, cut the blackthorn back, then stick the branch back in afterwards so the caterpillar has a food source once hatched. January is a good time to survey for eggs.

8. HENFIELD COMMON:

MA confirms recent work: volunteers coppiced willow and birch around the memorial field edge, cut out non-natives in the woodland such as Wilson's Honeysuckle, coppiced roadside trees, and managed scrub on footpaths. Upcoming works include mowing, cut and collect around benches, and breeding birds surveying. MA notes they recently found frogspawn around a ditch cleared last year.

MA confirms there have been no further comments regarding the oak haloing. GP notes Liquidamber Tree Surgery posted a video of the work on Facebook and Instagram. RN queried jagged branches protruding from the large veteran, and MA confirmed this is regenerating existing gorse. RN mentions recently observing a small production company filming under the oak. PC clarifies that either a flat fee per hour or a day rate is charged for filming on Council land, and the Parish can request this when approached.

JW updates on Ancient Tree Inventory recording, having listed the tree by Dannys Pond and old hazel coppices along Hollands Lane.

JP to ask Steve Bailey or Rob Jordan about protecting the hazel coppices

GP requests an update regarding the potholes at Henfield Common North and CIL benefits. PC has discussed this with Nigel Weston and explains repairs would need to be programmed work via Property's capital budget in the next financial year.

GP notes that there is building at the back of Henfield Common where shrubs and trees have been removed.

JP notes proposed planning on land at the bowling green could have an impact on reed beds and drainage. Residents of Henfield Common North have had historic garden flooding and have expressed concern. JP notes there are two protected old oaks at the site. PC confirms both the Parish Council and HCJC can comment on the proposal, but Parks will likely not be consulted as it is a small development. HDC's drainage officer, Amy Furness, can request more information or say the proposal is not adequate if that is the case. JP confirms the planning officer, Tamara Dale, has conducted a site visit this week.

PC to discuss the application, drainage, and hydrology of the site with Amy Furness.

RN notes a sapling has appeared in the reed bed again. MA confirms a section will have the reed cut and willows dug out this year. The sections are managed on a two-yearly cycle via Stuart Brierley. The frontage cannot be cut due to the beginning of bird breeding season.

GP and TB mention oil is visible in a drain by the A281. Likely to be road runoff but if it persists it may indicate a permanent leak. MA to monitor.

9. BROADMARE COMMON:

MA confirms completed pond management tasks: reed mace, willow, cut and collect.

TB notes that little wildlife has been present in the past and GP confirms she has never seen waterbirds at the site. MA says they can conduct Great Crested Newt and breeding birds monitoring. The Black Pond has been opened up but is still nutrient rich. It can be better assessed later in Spring. PC further confirms that the pond has adapted to decades of leaf drop so likely the only way to remedy this is desilting and finding a location on site for the spoil.

MA confirms sited species: Chiff Chaff, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Goldcrest, Blackbird, Dunnock.

MA notes that waterbirds may not be attracted to the pond until the vegetation has time to establish, but the Lilypond is looking good on this front.

10. OREHAM COMMON:

MA confirms tasks completed: cut and collect, robo-mowing, clearing and scalloping to prevent scrub encroachment into the meadow, and willow and scrub clearance on the southern pond along the lane. The other pond did not require maintenance. JW notes he used to go in with waders to remove reedmace from the southern pond, but this year only willow was present. JP asks about fly-tipping at the site and MA confirms no major fly-tipping was found whilst clearing bramble and litter-picking.

MA confirms upcoming reptile, pond, and Great Crested Newt surveys.

11. BUDGET/EXPENDITURE - see table overleaf:

Income consists of fair income and reimbursements for tools, totalling £1,638.

Revenue totals £20,373.

Expenditure total to date sits at £15,694.89.

Remaining balance to date sits at £6,316.

MA details approximate upcoming expenses, all to be confirmed by MA and PC and invoiced before 25/26 budget end:

- Tanyard field gate at £600
- Replacement of Broadmere bollard and change of field access gate away from brambles by external contractor
- Great Crested Newt kits totalling £1,760 for 11 ponds
- Hedgehog footprint tunnels at a cost of £96.45 for ten
- Reptile sheets at £220
- Eco-plugs for non-native species (slow-release glyphosate) at £323.84
- Tanyard fencing materials including post and rail and hanging posts, and livestock netting to replace the back gate, at approximately £900.

GP thanks PC and Colette Blackburn for information provided on herbicides and pesticides after a local resident expressed concern over the use of glyphosate. PC confirms there are alternatives to glyphosate, but none are very effective. The acetic acid and pelargonic acid alternatives change soil pH. and so have negative knock-on effects on wildlife and biodiversity. PC worked out Park's overall glyphosate usage is around ten litres, which is negligible.

MA confirms items for next year's budget to be discussed in more detail at the time: cut and collect on all sites, potential gate and fence by Chestnut End, Tanyard management plan.

PC clarifies budget queries: tree works earmarked by Neal will come from HDC's trees budget, and robo-mowing and hedge-trimming at the Tanyard were ultimately covered by HDC budgets, not the Parish or Committee budgets. The final budget source sometimes depends on the contractor used for the works.

PC included the £28,000 easement figure in the budget information for reference, but there is no pressure regarding its use. GP queries if it can be used for works at Alma Cottages, and RN queries if it would be treated as capital under LGR. PC clarifies the easement was paid for residents to have right of access over Henfield Common, and the committee agrees the easement money must stay with Henfield Common North. GP prefers that it put to good use sooner rather than later to prevent potential difficulties with LGR later on.

General brainstorming of potential uses for easement money: improved deterrent gates, tidying the causeway, pathway drainage, pathway resurfacing.

PC confirms £28k would not cover the full pathway resurfacing costs and TB notes that there is a stretch of 5-10m of path near Pigeon Croft without Type 1, which could be surfaced using the easement money.

Pete to check if £28,000 easement would be treated as capital under LGR

All committee members to brainstorm projects for the easement money

12. LOCAL GOVT REORGANISATION:

HPC attended a meeting with Paul Anderson, after which there was a general feeling that there would be few asset transfers going ahead.

RN relates that a member of HPC understood that the Common was common land and therefore unowned. RN notes that clarity is required regarding responsibility for commons.

PC provides an overview of the current position regarding LGR: parish councils have so far requested assets such as car parks, play areas, recreation grounds, buildings, and so on. PC says he has not rejected any requests for play areas or recreation grounds, but he knows some car park requests have been rejected. Larger conservation sites requiring considerable maintenance like

Warnham Nature Reserve, Chesworth Farm, Owlbeech and Leechpool Woods, Bramber Brooks, Sandgate Park, Commons, and Southwater Country Park do have a process for transfer but need to be considered separately, whereas play areas are largely managed by mowing and boundary maintenance. When requesting assets, a parish needs to provide a business plan considering the management requirements of the site and whether they have reasonable capacity to take the site on. However, PC has also spoken to other unitary councils in which a parish has taken on ownership of a site which is still managed by the unitary, so the contract remains the same.

PC notes that ultimately there is no rush at this time as we do not yet know the shape of the unitary, there is no deadline, and other assets will be prioritised above Parks, so change may be slow for the first couple of years of LGR.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS?

GP confirms the fair is not going ahead this year, and the fair's committee did not appear to have a strong view on what time of year it should be held.

General agreement to be open to any non-aligned community reps.

Meeting closed at 11.40

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS: 6th March '26 / 5th June '26 / 4th Sept '26

All meetings are held in the Committee Room at Henfield Hall and start at 10-00am.

	Name of Supplier	Details	Amount
Income			
17/09/2025	Shaylers Funfair	Use of HC for fair 3 days	1125
16/02/2026	Henfield Cons Vols	Reimbursement for Friends tools	513
		Total Income	1638

Expenditure

Date	Name of Supplier	Details	Cost
01/05/2025	Stuart Brierly	Green Waste Removal - Henfield Common	770
01/06/2025	Grasstex	Mowing Henfield Common Bund June	250
		Repairs/Replacement to timber bridge rails and posts - Broadmere Common	340
25/06/2025	Del Wood	No Horse Signs	37.61
06/08/2025	Sign Shed	Wooden gate - The Tanyard	1025
07/08/2025	Nick Blunt	Floating Island - The Tanyard	1240
09/09/2025	Verdant Solutions Ltd		
11/09/2025	Rob Jochimsen	Cut and collect Henfield Commons and Tanyard	7145
12/09/2025	Ryman	Craft materials	10.4
12/09/2025	Tesco	Craft materials	7.08
01/10/2025	Grasstex	Mowing Henfield Common bund Sep	250
01/10/2025	Stuart Brierly	Removal of arisings (marsh area)	300
01/10/2025	Dolphin Ecological Services	Ecological Surveys - The Tanyard	1200
19/11/2025	Jewson	MOT Type-1	95.6
24/11/2025	Jewson	MOT Type-1	33.46
03/12/2025	Oz Group	Halo thinning and veteran management	2097.02
		Repairs/Replacement to timber bridge rails and posts - Broadmere Common	380
26/01/2026	Del Wood	Friends tools	221.4
29/01/2026	ATS machinery	Friends tools	292.32
03/02/2026	ATS machinery		
		Total Expenditure	15694.89

Budget	£20,373	Balance remaining	£6,316
	Future spend	TY metal field gate refurb	800
		Replacement of bollards and changing field access	2379
		Hedge cutting TY	TBC
		Easement reserve fund	£28,260